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THE GOOD OLD WAY:

A Discourse

ON THE

NATURE, IMPORTANCE, AND SUBJECTS

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

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The Good Old Way.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations—baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
—MAT. xxviii. 19.

THESE words are frequently termed the Apostolic commission, and are intimately connected with the Holy Catholic Church in every period of the Christian dispensation. They were uttered by our blessed Lord a little before his ascension into heaven, and may be regarded as his last charge to the Apostles whom he had chosen. You will immediately perceive, my brethren, that our Saviour here institutes baptism as a sacrament of the Christian covenant, and that according to the original, *Matheeteusate panta te ethna baptizontes autous*, the Apostles were commanded to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them, thus plainly implying the importance and benefits of the divine sacrament.

In calling your attention to these words I purpose by God's assistance to notice—

- I. The nature and design of Christian Baptism.
- II. The proper subjects of the holy ordinance.

A Sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace, instituted by Christ himself, as a seal to all the cove-

nant promises of the Gospel, and as a visible channel through which divine grace is imparted. Now, as my text assures us that baptism was instituted by Christ, and as it has for its outward and visible sign the element of water, and for its inward grace the Spirit of God with the water, producing a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, we most justly pronounce it a sacrament of the Christian Church in which is communicated grace to the receiver according to the Word of the Lord.

This blessed sacrament is not only the door of entrance into the visible Church, but it is also the ordinance in which believing parents and their children are regenerated to Christ, and it is that alone in which we have been *born again*, and become the children of God. This indeed appears evident from the fact that while duties, practices, and graces, are in the New Testament often urged upon the baptized, the new birth is never once urged upon those who have already been grafted into Christ in this holy ordinance. The administration of *water alone*, although shed upon the subjects abundantly, would not constitute the sacrament of baptism, unless accompanied by the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the word of our Saviour.

In St. John iii. 5, our blessed Lord taught this great truth to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of *water* and the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." From this it appears evident that there is no true baptism without *water* and the *Spirit*, the water being the visible, and the Spirit represented by the *water* being the invisible part of the sacrament. The *water* itself would be a dead ordinance, but with the

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Holy Spirit it becomes a living one ; nor are we authorized to believe that in ordinary cases the Spirit will be given without the application of the water. Jesus said, "*born of water and the Spirit*, and the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world has reiterated the saying down to the present hour : and as he limited the new birth to water and the Spirit, and never in his whole life intimated the possibility of regeneration coming through any other channel, so his Church, loyal and true to her Saviour, declares in her public service, with boldness and confidence, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

Thus in conformity with our Lord's teaching, St. Paul writes in his Epistle to Titus, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration*, and *renewing of the Holy Ghost*.—Titus iii. 5, 6. Now, here again my brethren, the Apostle presents to our view the full sacrament; consisting of the two parts—first, the *washing of regeneration*, and, secondly, the *renewing of the Holy Spirit*—the former the visible, and the latter the invisible part of the sacred ordinance. Unbelievers sometimes tell us that St. Paul here refers to a spiritual baptism, and to that only, so that according to their view of the subject he speaks of nothing in the passage but the renewing of the Holy Ghost ; but unfortunately for them he also speaks in the same connection of the washing of regeneration : thus introducing the full sacrament with its two parts, the *birth of water and of the Spirit*, agreeably with the doctrine of Jesus.

But St. Paul in the text just quoted declares, "we are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," and the objector enquires in

astonishment, "Can we be saved by water?" We cannot indeed, my brethren, be saved by water, but we can be saved, and we are saved by the Holy Sacrament, *water* and the *Spirit*; the water being the acknowledged channel through which the Holy Spirit is imparted. But where did St. Paul receive his information? I answer from Christ himself; for as when Saul of Tarsus he was struck down to the ground by a light from heaven, and heard a voice which he knew to be that of Jesus saying unto him "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" the convicted sinner immediately made the anxious inquiry "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts ix. 6. And the Lord said unto him "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Accordingly he was led to the city, and there Annanias, the ordained minister, was directed to instruct him. But how does he do this? By collecting a few of his neighbors together in the shape of a modern revival meeting for prayer, in order that the wanderer might be reclaimed, or be truly regenerated? Not so my brethren; Annanias had not so learned Christ. What then was the promised instruction which was to be imparted to Saul in the city? We have it in the following words, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*."—Acts xxii. 16. He complied with the heavenly requirement, and received the remission of his sins "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Nor is St. Paul alone in declaring that we are *saved* through this heavenly washing; for when speaking upon the same subject St. Peter uses the very same language. Thus in speaking of Noah's ark saving the

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eight souls at the time of the flood, he says "the like figure whereunto even *baptism* doth now save us."—1 Peter iii. 20, 21: and this baptism that now saves us embraces the whole sacrament, viz: the *washing* of regeneration, and the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost.

A similar enquiry to that of Saul's was made by the awakened Jews upon the day of Pentecost, or Whit Sunday "Men and brethren what shall we do?" The enquiry of course had reference to the favor of God and the salvation of the Lord. Now my brethren, you know the answer a sectarian would naturally give to the aforementioned question. You must attend our prayer meetings, we are going to have a revival, and expect a great many sinners to get religion at it. You must bow down before a mourner's seat, and we will all unite with you in pleading with God until he regenerates you, and you are born again. Thus sectarians teach, and thus they substitute the appointment of man for the solemn ordinance of God. But what saith the Scriptures, to the enquirer, verily the very same that the Church says "Repent and be baptized everyone of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii. 37, 38. And O, if the sects had been in existence at that time how they would have abused the Apostles for teaching such a doctrine! They could not have called it popish, for neither the papist nor sectarian had any existence when the words were uttered; but they would undoubtedly have found some other name to distinguish it by. The whole thing would have been denounced as *unevangelical*, and the college of Apostles would have been loaded with reproach by our modern *lights* had they been present at the delivery of the

famous sermon. Doubtless they would have said we do not fancy this religion of Peter, for he says what the Churchman says we must be baptized *for the remission* of sins, in order to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; but we believe in receiving this gift and the remission of sins also antecedent to baptism and independent of it. Peter preaches against our doctrines and thinks no religion right but his own, whereas we think our sect and faith is as good as another.

But, my brethren, this doctrine of the apostles is just as reasonable as it is divine: for if baptism be what Christ represents it to be (Mark xvi. 16), the seal of the Christian covenant, it is but natural to judge that we must enter into the covenant before we obtain the benefit of it. And the system that teaches the contrary doctrine, that remission of sins, adoption, and such like blessings can, and must be obtained before baptism to entitle a person to receive it, is most unquestionably of the devil, for the obliteration of true religion, and the annihilation of the church: therefore his opposition to the New Testament doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

This apostolic faith as taught in the passage of holy Scripture just quoted, sets forth the true character of the Christian Sacrament, not in one part alone, but in both parts conjointly: *water* and the *Spirit* constituting the sacred rite. John the Baptist we are told, "preached the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*," Luke iii. 3, and Christian baptism is invariably declared to be both by water and the Spirit, Mat. iii. 11, the water the sign and the Spirit the thing signified. But here again the unbeliever objects to baptismal regeneration from the fact that in their sub-

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sequent life the baptized very often give sad evidence that they have neither part nor lot in the matter of true religion: Acts viii. 24, on this account therefore many reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But the temptation arises from the calvinistic teaching "once in grace always in grace," and persons embracing that dangerous error naturally enquire how can all baptised persons be regenerated, unless they have all been predestinated to life eternal before the foundation of the world; and being convinced that the baptized are not all predestinated, they cannot believe in baptismal regeneration.

But, my brethren, in the sacred Scriptures we are warned of the possibility of the baptized breaking the sacred covenant, and thus forfeiting all the blessings of it, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, and that therefore we are to watch, Mat. xxv. 13, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, 2 Peter, i. 10, evidently implying that it is not made sure to those who habitually break the covenant of their baptism. Still we are safe in preaching baptismal regeneration because it is clearly revealed in the divine Word. We are assured that the prodigal was a *son* when he was sent into the fields to feed swine, nor was he mistaken, for the Father acknowledges him as his child, or as being born again, Luke xv. 24. Indeed there are many prodigals who wander from their father's house, the church, Heb. iii. 6, but who have been truly born again in the divine sacrament.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, pronounces every one of that church as being born again or made the children of God. Thus he declares "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus: for as many

of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."—Gal. iii. 26–7. Now it is difficult to imagine that when a Judas was found among the Apostles that all the Galatian Christians were truly and sincerely pious, but we are most certainly assured that they were all regenerated, simply because they had all been baptized into Christ, Gal. iii. 27, and this was the reason the apostle gave for saying they were all children. Oh but, says the objector, they were all pious! Very far from it indeed. In the 4th chap. and 20th verse the apostle expresses a doubt of their piety and intimates that they had fallen from grace. He says "*I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain,*" Gal. iv. 11. He was confident that in many of them Christ was not formed, Gal. iv. 19, and yet to such Christians as these he writes "*ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,*" giving, at the same time the reason why he said so, "*for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.*"

Indeed, I am very much astonished that there should be any but one opinion upon the subject of baptismal regeneration; for I believe Christians of every sect and party regard baptism as the door of entrance into the Church. Then surely it is the ordinance of the new birth; for how could a person be born into the Church before he be admitted into it? and if by baptism he be admitted into it, then surely by baptism he is born into it. And if Christ admits him into his church by baptism, does he do so, and retain his sins? but if God forgives, whom he receives in the sacrament, does he not also acknowledge the person received as his child? and if he thus acknowledges him in the sacrament, then surely he regenerates him in

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the holy ordinance just as the New Testament teaches. 1 Pet. iii. 21, Titus iii. 5, 8, Acts ii. 37, 38, Mark i. 4.

Now that baptism is the ordinance of the new birth into Christ's body the Church, is as evident from the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament as that penitency and faith are essential to salvation. Thus St. Paul writes to the Romans, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ* were baptized into his death." Rom. vi. 3. And in 1 Cor. xii. 13, we are informed "that by one *Spirit* they were all baptized into one body:" and that this body into which they were baptized was the church we learn from his Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he informed them that God gave Christ "to be head over all things to the Church *which is his body*," Ephe. i. 22, 23. Therefore the meaning of the following passages, "Baptized *into Jesus Christ*," Rom. vi. 3. 4. "Baptized *into one body*," 1 Cor. xii. 13. "Baptized *into Christ*," Gal. 3. 27. "Baptized *for the dead*," 1 Cor. xv. 29. "*In Christ*," 2 Cor. xii. 2. "Who were *in Christ* before me," Rom. xvi. 7. "Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*," Rev. xiv. 13.

Baptismal regeneration is the acknowledged faith of every branch of the Catholic Church in existence. It is confessed in the Second Article of the Augsburg Confession, where it says "that natural depravity is really sin, and still condemns and causes doctrinal death to all those who are not *born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost*." So also in Luther's Catechism in answer to the question, "What are the benefits of baptism?" we read, "It causes forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to those that believe; as the word and

promise of God declare." Again in the same catechism we have the following questions and answers: "When did the Holy Ghost begin this sanctification in you? In the holy ordinance of baptism. What did God promise you in holy baptism? God promised, and also bestowed upon me the forgiveness of sins; life and salvation." Thus the doctrine is expressed and confessed by the Church of the blessed reformation.

The Church of England also in her Catechism has the following: "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?"

"I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace *given unto us.*"

"What is the outward visible sign or form in baptism? Water, &c. What is the inward and spiritual grace? A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace."

True to the sacred Scriptures the Methodists also in their catechism adopt the very language of the church catechism, and declares the sacrament to have two parts—the outward and the inward; the former *water*, and the latter a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

So also the Presbyterians confess in the Westminster Confession "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also to be unto him a *sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up*

unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life : which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world." *Chap. 28, Westmin. Conf.*

Also in Section 2 of Chapter 27, we read, "There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified."

So also in the Larger Catechism, in answer to question 165 we have what follows : "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of *remission of sins* by his blood, and *regeneration* by his Spirit ; of *adoption* and resurrection unto everlasting life ; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's."

Such, my brethren, is the testimony of all learned Christian bodies in regard to the great truth of our regeneration to Christ in the holy sacrament of baptism.

Thus, having noticed the nature and design of Christian baptism, I proceed

II. To notice the subjects of the holy ordinance.

In order, my brethren to understand this subject correctly, it is necessary to understand the great commission as found in my text. In it we find the subjects of baptism as communicated to us by Christ himself in the following words, "*Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.*" Baptizing whom we naturally

inquire? the nations according to the plain words of my text. Now nations are composed of *men, women, and children*, therefore, when Christ commanded his Embassadors to make disciples of the nations by baptizing them he gave commandment to baptize *infants* as well as men and women. But says the objector, he meant to exclude the infant: for believing adults are only embraced in the commission. But as Jesus did not except the infants it becomes sin in any mortal man to do so for him; and if one man's whims be allowed in this case why not another? If it be proper and right in one to say that Christ meant in this commission to exclude the infant, has not another an equal right to say he did not mean to include the male? and may not the third declare his belief that our Lord intended to exclude the female? Thus presumption might be added to presumption, and Christ's holy ordinance might finally be set aside altogether under another supposition that he did not mean what he really expressed, when he commissioned his apostles. But in spite of all contending parties the words of Jesus still stand sure, "Make disciples of all nations baptizing them." He has made no exceptions, and even the church itself has no right to do it for him. And my text is the guarantee to all his ministers to the end of the world to baptize the infants in the name of the Holy Trinity.

But we are told by some that the commission means that the nations must be made disciples first, and then be baptized on profession of their discipleship. They say that Christ meant to enjoin three things, each standing in the same relation to the command as the other. First we are told he commanded his apostles

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to make disciples of all nations, secondly he commanded the disciples thus made to be baptized, and thirdly he commanded that they should afterwards be taught. But, my brethren, our blessed Lord does not issue three commandments in the passage, but only one. For if he did the known laws of grammar would require that each item should be enjoined in the same form if contained in the same sentence. The wording of the commission we find delivered in one imperative verb (*matheeteusate*) and two participles *baptizontes* and *didaskontes*, the first signifying *make disciples*, the second *baptizing*, and the third *teaching*. We have the very highest authority for believing that these are not alike imperative; for the active participle when connected with the imperative mood always expresses the manner in which the thing commanded is to be performed. For instance the following: Clean the room, *washing* it; clean the floor, *sweeping* it; cultivate the field, *ploughing* it; sustain the hungry, *feeding* them; furnish the soldiers, arming them, *Make disciples* of the nations, *baptizing* them: all of which are exactly the same forms of speech. Every scholar in existence will acknowledge this to be correct. The thing to be done is expressed by the imperative verb; and it is only the manner in which the thing is to be done that is described in the connected participle. And so *matheeteusate* "disciple the nations," describes the whole work to be done. This is the general imperative injunction, including all that follows; whilst the participles *baptizontes* and *didaskontes*, *baptizing* and *teaching* them only describes the mode or particular way in which the disciples, or scholars, are to be made. *Matheeteusate* presents the work to be accomplished,

and the participles *baptizantes* and *didakontes* describe the way in which the great work enjoined is to be effected: and therefore infants are included in the commission.

Indeed, my brethren, in this commission Jesus very plainly includes our children. He does not regard them as infidels, sceptics, foreigners, and strangers, but as Christians, constructive believers, at least until they have grown to years of discretion, and by their own deeds have placed themselves in a different attitude.

"What an idea!" exclaims the unbeliever. "Might we not as well attempt to cure bedlam with syllogisms as reason with persons who speak of believing militant infants? If any general should talk of raising an army of infants to oppose an invading enemy he would at once be deemed insane, and his sovereign would not one moment longer intrust him to command." Let us see where this terrible charge of madness falls, and with what sort of logic it is sustained.

In Jeremiah i. 5, God says to the youthful prophet, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." In Hosea xi. 1, the Lord saith, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him." In Luke i. 15, the angel declares of John that he should be "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." St. Paul says to Timothy, iii. 15, "From a child, (*apo brephous*) from an infant, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures;" and Jesus says of infants "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"Supposing," it is said, "a statesman would call a parliament of infants he would be deemed insane." And why? we ask. Because they have neither the ne-

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cessary knowledge nor experience. Very true. And yet it was deemed right and proper by the whole nation that the Prince of Wales should be acknowledged a member of the House of Lords from his infancy ; and from his baptism his name occupied the first place on the roll of that honorable house without disadvantage to British interests, or the credit of the British Constitution. In the book of Numbers, iii. 28, we read of the family of the Kohathites that to their males from a month old and upwards was given the charge of keeping the sanctuary. What ! the objector might say, infants a month old to keep God's sanctuary ! Might we not as well attempt to cure bedlam with syllogisms as reason with persons who talk of infants keeping a charge ? Yet, after all, this was the very arrangement of God himself, and recorded by the Holy Ghost for our learning. In Deut. xxix. 10, Moses says to Israel, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God ; your Captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and thy stranger, *that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord, thy God, and unto his oath* which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." What ! infants enter into covenant, infants stand up to take an oath,—madness, exclaims the unbeliever ; but either Moses was a lunatic, or this very thing was done.

The fact is, God never did enter into covenant with man without including the infant. The covenant with Abraham included the infant eight days old.—Gen. xvii. 7. The covenant of Moses did the same.—Deut. xxix. 10. And the new covenant, as embraced in my text, did the same thing, for the infant was included

among the parties that were to be made disciples by baptism. And when St. Peter full of the Holy Ghost came to expound this new covenant on the day of Pentecost, he said to all who yielded to his words "The promise is to you and your children."—Acts ii. 38.

Thus far, my brethren, I have showed you that Christ included the infants in the commission, as found in my text. I will now proceed to show you that the Apostles themselves understood it in the same light that we do, and that they did therefore baptize infants. In Acts xvi. 14, 15, we read of a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul, "and she was baptized and all her (*oikos*) family or household." In the same chapter we also read of a terrified jailor, that he was baptized and all his. In 1 Cor. i. 16, St. Paul declares, "And I baptized also the (*oiken*) family, of Stephanus." In Acts x. 2, we read of a devout man who feared God whom St. Peter baptized *with all his* (*oiko*) family. In Acts xviii. 8, we read also of Crispus, the chief ruler of the Synagogue, who was baptized with all his (*oiko*) family. In 2 Tim. i. 16, and iv. 19, we find mention of the (*oiko*) family of Onesiphorus in a way that leads us to believe that all its members had been baptized, and that mention made only for their father's sake. Nor is there any good reason why the families of Aristobulus and Narcissus, Rom. xvi. 10, 11, should not be in the list of Apostolic household baptisms.

Here there are eight (*oiko*) families, four of them explicitly said to have been baptized by the apostles, and all referred to as *Christian families*, and therefore certainly not unbaptized. Now have we eight instances

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of the administration of the Lord's Supper? Not half that number. Have we eight instances of the change of the Jewish into the Christian Sabbath? Perhaps not one-fourth of that number. Yet the communion and this change of the day are vindicated by apostolic practice as recorded in the New Testament. How can we, then, deny that the apostles baptized children with their parents when it is established by a series of instances more numerous than can be found in support of any other doctrine, principle, or practice handed down from apostolic times.

But during the last fifty or a hundred years the Church has been gravely told that Lydia's *household* consisted only of servants who were associated with her in conducting her business, and that the *house* of the jailor was perhaps similarly constituted. But I most positively deny that *oikos* ever signifies servants or attendants. It denotes *blood, lineage, progeny, children* according to all authority on the subject. "The house (*oikos*) of Israel" means the *children* of Israel; "the house of David," the lineal descendents of David; "the house of Judah," the progeny of Judah; and not the servants and employees of Israel, David, and Judah. "*Oikos*," says Aristotle "is a companionship connected together according to the course of nature." "The first social connection," says Cicero, "is the conjugal, then that of *children*, and *these* constitute a house or family." "I know Abraham," saith the Lord, "that he will command his *children* even his house (*oiko*), family or children after him." Indeed I know not one single case in the New Testament or in the Septuagint where *oikos* does not mean children, and for the most part it means children exclusively. Talk of *oikos* meaning only at-

tendants and slaves ! why every Greek scholar in existence would laugh to scorn such an idea, and utterly despise the man who should undertake to maintain it.

It is a remarkable fact that the earliest and perhaps the best translation of the New Testament, the Syriac, says of Lydia that "she was baptized with her children." But we are gravely told that Lydia's children were grown men, because they are expressly declared to have been brethren, whom the apostles saw and comforted when released from prison. But we are not told that Lydia had any grown up sons, and a Sunday scholar would readily know that the brethren of Paul and Silas referred to, were, unquestionably, Timothy and Luke their companions in travel and fellow missionaries.

But it is also insinuated that after all, the jailor's *children* were grown persons, because that it is said he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. See there ! says the unbeliever : these babes are old enough to know spiritual joy, and to utter the praises of God. Well, be it so. Jeremiah was sanctified before he was born, and St. John the baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. The record, however, says nothing about spiritual joy, or praises to God in connection with the jailor's children. The words are, explicit that he himself did the rejoicing, "believing in God." This he did not in the *absence* of his family, but with all his house, those old enough sympathizing with him in the joy of his marvellous deliverance from impending death, and the youngest not excluded from the scene of his festivity. Indeed, my brethren, if the jailor's children were adults, how did it happen that St. Paul promised salvation to them on

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condition of their father's faith. The apostle said to the jailor *alone*, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy (*oikos*) children." Let the unbeliever explain this if he can, and tell us whether, when he immerses a father, he thereupon promises salvation to all his grown up sons and daughters. Now just admit that the children of believers are entitled to baptism, and everything about the passage is explained; but deny this and the whole case is forever inexplicable. The Bible says that the jailor's children were baptized along with himself, and that salvation was promised to them on the ground of their father's faith; and the double inference is, therefore, inevitable, that they were not of an age to make a Christian profession for themselves, and that the apostles did actually baptize children.

But as to the children of Stephanus, it is said that they were adults when they were baptized: first, because it is said that "many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized;" though there is no evidence that Stephanus was a Corinthian at all, he and his (*oikos*) family being, we are told, "the first fruits of Achaia;" and, secondly, because it is said of them that they had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." But great changes occur in growing families in course of eight or ten years. The boy in the year fifty-one, when Stephanus and his family were baptized, would naturally be a man in fifty-nine, when the record was made. The eldest of the children of Stephanus may have been ten or fifteen years old when they were baptized, whilst others may have been mere babes; and yet it might easily be said of them ten years afterward, that they had showed much kindness to their fellow

Christians. Our Sunday Schools contain many a child entitled to be called an angel of mercy for its good deeds towards the poor and suffering. And why could not these children, especially under a pious father's guidance, some of whom were now pretty well grown up, addict themselves to ministering to the saints, although ten years previous some of them were mere babes. Does the objector hold that once an infant always an infant, and maintain that because this family was noted for its kindness in A. D. 60, not one of its members could have been under ten or twelve years of age in A. D. 50? If not, then all the stress laid upon the Christian activity of the "first fruits of Achaia," ten years after they were baptized must pass for nothing; and we are left to believe that the children of Stephanus, when baptized by St. Paul, were no more than children. Indeed the very manner in which we come to know anything about this baptism is conclusive evidence that even so long after the baptising had been performed these children were yet too young to be of any material force in the affairs of the Church. Factions had sprung up at Corinth. One was for Paul, another was for Apollos, and a third was for Peter. A letter was written to rebuke these disorders. St. Paul the writer of it sets himself to show the absurdity of such a thing as a Paul party in that Church. He tells them that he had been crucified for nobody, and that with his own hand he had not baptized any but Chrispus and Gaius, who do not seem to have taken the general infection. And then with a certain tardiness, as if he were undecided as to whether it would be worth while to mention it, he adds, "*However, I baptized the household of Stephanus,*" intimating that they

were hardly to be taken into account on this question, as they were not of sufficient influence or age to be much support to any party. He first passes them altogether: "I thank God that I baptized none of you *but Chrispus and Gaius.*" We demand the reason of this total omission. Had St. Paul forgotten? Can an inspired man, recording his own official acts, forget? There is no explanation, and can be none given, except upon the ground that these children of Stephanus were yet *minors*, and for that reason quite out of the question which the Apostle had before him. If they had been adults, they were just as likely to be Paulians, because St. Paul had baptized them, as Chrispus and Gaius, and it could only be because they were still too young to have anything to do with those party disputes that St. Paul esteemed it hardly worth while to refer to them in such a connection. If this does not prove that children were among the subjects of Apostolic baptism, we know nothing about the force of evidence. And as to the fact that the house of Stephanus addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, were this a proof that they had among them no infants, we might find a proof that the house of the Recabites had among them no infants, because in Jer. xxxv. 2-11, they addicted themselves to perform the commandment of their father. The general terms are even stronger in the latter instance than in the former; but in both, the exceptions of infancy may be equally understood.

A book written about thirty-six years ago, to prove that infants were included in the *oikoi*, baptized by the Apostles, was submitted to the Baptists of Britain, with a challenge for their refutation. Years passed away, but no refutation was attempted. The book was

even submitted to a Baptist Association, with the most respectful solicitation that they would either admit the truth of its positions or have them refuted, but the request was disregarded. And from that day to the present *Taylor's facts and evidences on the subjects of Christian baptism remain unanswered, and without any attempt at an answer by any Baptist on either side of the Atlantic Ocean.*

Thus far, my brethren, I have proved that infant baptism is found in the sacred commission given by Christ to his Apostles, and that they themselves so regarded it. I shall now refer you to the covenant of which baptism is the seal, and from a knowledge of its character you will obtain additional light upon the subject. This covenant was first made with Abraham, and it is the same now as when given to him. It was made about thirty years before the birth of Isaac, as you may learn from the twelfth chapter of the book of Genesis; and it was established and ratified in the seventeenth—at which time circumcision, as its sign and seal, was instituted. Hence, thus saith the Lord, “This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised.” “And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you.”—Gen. xvii. 10, 12. But I wish especially to direct your attention to the fact, that this covenant was never to terminate, and that it embraced the blessings of the gospel. In the seventh verse of the seventeenth chapter of the book of Genesis, God says to Abraham: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an *everlasting* covenant.” Now in this quotation the covenant is said to

be an everlasting one ; which I think is very positive testimony that God did not design it to be abrogated by the Christian dispensation. Accordingly we find David referring to it, in such a manner as to show he was well acquainted with the perpetuity of its character : " Be ye always mindful of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, even the covenant that he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." On this passage I need hardly say that David refers to the covenant of Abraham ; and as in the book of Genesis this covenant is said to be everlasting, so David in this passage declares it to be spoken to a thousand generations ; but as it was only forty and two generations from Abraham to Christ, we have very strong evidence for concluding that the law of the covenant was never to be repealed. Nor are we left merely to reason from the Old Testament scriptures upon this subject ; for in the New Testament the covenant is regarded in the same light. Thus, in the third chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, 14th verse, we read of " the blessing of Abraham coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Verse 17—Of the promises " being made to Abraham and his seed." Verse 18—Of the impossibility of the covenant being repealed with the ceremonial law. Verse 29—Of all baptized persons being Abraham's seed, and heirs " according to the promise : " thus in the most unequivocal language giving testimony to the fact, that Abraham's covenant was not to be repealed, and that it embraced the blessings of the gospel.

This truth being ascertained, as it has been to a po-

sitive certainty, you will immediately see its bearing upon infant baptism ; for if the covenant be the same now as when given to Abraham, it must embrace the same subjects, viz : believers, and their infant children ; so that if I can but prove Christian baptism to answer the same purpose as Jewish circumcision, and to be ordained in its place by the authority of Christ, I prove all that is necessary to be proved upon this subject, and thereby sustain the doctrine of infant baptism.— And here allow me to say that as the infant child was entitled to the seal of the covenant in the old church because God had promised to be its God, so the infant child is entitled to the seal in the new church, and that for the same reason.—Gen. xvii. 7. I shall, therefore, with this understanding, proceed to prove Christian baptism to be affixed to the covenant as its sign and seal, even as circumcision was affixed to it, in the former dispensation. In the gospel by St. Mark our Lord declares, “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”—Mark xvi. 16. Now as *salvation* is the *covenant* that God made with Abraham, and our Lord affixed baptism to this covenant, is it not manifest that he regarded it as the token and seal of his covenant, and in the place of Jewish circumcision. Accordingly St. Peter instructs the Jews, saying, “ Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ; for the *promise* is unto *you*, and to *your children*.”—Acts ii. 38, 39. Now what promise could Peter refer them to, but the well known words of the covenant—“ I will be a God to *thee* and thy *seed* after thee :” and why should he thus connect baptism with this covenant, if he designed not to teach them that

baptism was in the place of circumcision, and the seal of the covenant?

Nor is there any force in the evasion, that the apostle referred his hearers to the prophecy of Joel; for, could this be even proved, the conclusion would be the same—that prophecy being founded upon the covenant, and having direct reference to its blessings. In a passage which I have already quoted from St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, he pronounces all baptized persons Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. Now as it is an acknowledged fact, that of old none were considered as the children of Abraham but those that were circumcised: so the apostle would (and that not obscurely) present the truth, that baptism is now the seal of the covenant, causing its subjects to be Abraham's seed, and "heirs according to promise."

But we have still more positive testimony that baptism was appointed by Christ, in the place of circumcision. In St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians they were plainly told, that baptism was "the circumcision of Christ."—Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom also (says he) ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the *circumcision of Christ*: buried with him in *baptism*." Now need I inform you that, according to this passage, the Colossian christians were regarded by St. Paul as being in a circumcised state—"In whom also ye are *circumcised*"—and should any inquire as to how they were circumcised, the apostle answers: "By the *circumcision of Christ*: buried with him in *baptism*:" thus plainly intimating, that baptism was Christ's circumcision, and consequently the seal of the covenant. It is called Christ's circumcision, just as the first day

of the week was called, by St. John, the *Lord's day*, because the Sabbath was changed to this day by Christ's appointment; or the Eucharistic supper was called the Lord's supper, because the Lord changed the ordinance of the passover to this sacrament: and in the same sense, we are to regard baptism as Christ's circumcision, because he appointed it in the place of circumcision, and as the token of his covenant.

If we adopt this interpretation of the passage, we may trace a fitness and accuracy of expression which can scarcely fail to assure us of its justice. Did Jewish circumcision represent the operation of divine grace upon the heart? Deut. xxx. 6, Rom. ii. 28, 29, so does Christian baptism: Mat. iii. 11, Heb. x. 22, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Did Jewish circumcision initiate its subjects into the congregation of God's people? Gen. xvii. 14,—so does Christian baptism: John iii. 5, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Did Jewish circumcision entitle its subjects to be called the children of God? Mat. xv. 26, Acts iii. 25,—so does Christian baptism: Gal. iii. 26, 27. Was Jewish circumcision affixed to the covenant by divine appointment? Gen. xvii. 10, 11,—so is Christian baptism; Mark xvi. 16, Acts ii. 38; and if thus answering every purpose of Jewish circumcision, there was an accuracy in the apostle's pronouncing it "the circumcision of Christ," which most certainly demands our special admiration.

The whole of this will appear still more consistent, when you clearly understand that the Jewish and the Christian churches are one and the same body; and that Christ came not to destroy that church, which he had established in the days of Abraham and the prophets. In the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's epistle to

the Romans, this truth is clearly presented. (Rom. xi. 17, Mat. xx. 16, 1 Peter ii. 10, Eph. ii. 14, Hos. ii. 23.—In the seventeenth verse, the Jews are represented as branches which are broken from off their own olive tree; while the Gentile christians are said to be grafted in among them, and with them partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree. In the nineteenth verse, the Jews are said to be the natural branches of this tree; while the Gentiles are introduced as being cut out of the wild olive tree, and grafted into the good olive tree—which, in the same verse, is said to be the Jews' own olive tree. Now these quotations being so positive, require no explanations: I shall therefore remark, that as christians are said to be grafted into the Jewish church, it is overwhelmingly evident they must be grafted in by some ordinance of divine appointment; and what ordinance can that be, but the circumcision of Christ, which St. Paul affirms to be baptism, and which, as I have already proved, is the door of entrance into the visible church.

Thus far I have considered the covenant as perpetual, embracing the children as well as the parents. I have also proved, from the most unequivocal testimony, that christian baptism is the seal of this covenant; and that, as the covenant embraces little children, so its sign and seal must be administered to them. You will now permit me to prove that young children are, by the inspired writers, acknowledged as members of the christian church.

In the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy; there is a remarkable allusion to our dispensation; and in connection with this allusion, we have the following testimony: "Their children shall be as aforetime,"

saith the Lord, Jer. xxx. 20. Now, then, granting the truth of this prophecy, it must be evident to all, that God did not design to repeal the law of bringing infants into his church; for you must all know, that the prophecy in question would not have been fulfilled if our children were not as aforetime. Therefore the passage, in the very clearest light, sustains the membership of infants, in our church and dispensation.— In the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, we have a similar prediction to that of Jeremiah. For thus saith the Lord, when speaking of the promised Messiah, "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house—the *offspring* and the *issue*."—Is. xlii. 24. By his *father's house*, we are to understand the church: which language clearly proves that by Divine authority they are not now rejected. But as it is unnecessary for me to multiply proofs upon this subject, I shall only refer you to one or two passages more, and then pass on to their fulfillment. "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles," saith the Lord. Is. xlix. 22. "For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their *offspring* with them."—Is. lxxv. 23. "I will pour my spirit upon thy *seed*, and my blessing upon thine *offspring*."—Is. xlii. 28.

Now when we compare these predictions of the Christian church, with the acknowledgment of the New Testament, we may be satisfied that Christ, in his Gospel, does not alter the standing of our infants. Does the prediction say, "Their children shall be as aforetime?" Jesus acknowledges the truth of this prediction, when he says of the little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," Mark x. 14, Luke xviii. 15; and that this kingdom means the church, is evident

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from the following passage: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."—Mark x. 15, 16. Now then, if little children are thus in the kingdom—if they are to be looked upon as models of imitation—if by becoming like little children, a person becomes a member in the kingdom, and the subject of baptism; surely those little ones, thus represented, are equally entitled to the ordinance. Does the prediction say, "They shall hang upon the Messiah all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue?" Jesus acknowledges the prediction when he says, "Whoso shall receive one such child in my name, receiveth me."—Matt. xviii. 5. Now I ask, how is Christ's church to receive the child, unless through baptism, which is the seal of the covenant, and the ordinance of initiation? In the language, then, of Christ, infant children are members of his church. In the language of St. Peter, they are still the subjects of Abraham's covenant; Acts ii. 39, Gal. iii. 14; and in the language of St. Paul they are still included in the blessing of Abraham, and consequently they are the true subjects of baptism.

I shall now call your attention to the fact, that the practice of baptizing children was universal, without any exception, in the primitive age of the church, Justin Martyr, about forty years after the apostolic age, writes of all Christians receiving spiritual circumcision. Again, he refers to several who, he says, were made disciples of Christ from their infancy.

Irenius, who was well acquainted with Polycarp, (St. John's disciple,) says, "Christ came to save all persons who by him are regenerated to God: infants,

little ones, youths, and elder persons." Again, he says, when Christ gave his apostles command of regenerating to God, he said: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them."

Origen, who was born eighty-five years from the apostle's day, declares, that the church had a command from the apostles, to baptize infants.

Cyprian, and the Council of Carthage, A. D., 253, may next be introduced. The following question being proposed by Fidus, the Presbyter, was submitted to the Council by Cyprian: "Can an infant be baptized before it is eight days old?" This council consisting of sixty-six Bishops were unanimous in their decision; which Cyprian communicated to Fidus, in the following words:—

"As to the case of infants, of whom you said that they ought not to be baptized within the second and third day after their birth; and that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far repeated, that they ought not to be baptized until the eighth day; we were all of a different opinion: for, if even to the foulest offender, when he believes, remission of sins is granted, and none is prohibited from baptism, how much more should an infant be admitted, who, being just born, hath not sinned at all, except, being carnally born through Adam, he hath contracted the contagion of ancient death. Our sentence, therefore, dearest brother, was, that none, by us, should be prohibited from baptism."

St. Ambrose says, that infant baptism was practiced in his time, and in the time of the apostles.

St. Hierome, about 280 years after the apostles, says: "If infants be not baptized, the sin of omitting their baptism is laid to the parents charge." But, though I might multiply quotations to the same effect,

I will only observe, at present, that the validity of infant baptism was not denied by any sect, until about A.D. 1103. It was first denied in France, by Peter De Bruis; but his sect very soon became extinct. It was next denied in Germany, A.D. 1522; but the whole current of scriptural, traditional, and historical evidence goes to show, that infant baptism was practiced by Christ and his apostles.

Thus far considering the evidence in favor of infant baptism, I now proceed to reply to certain objections which, from time to time, have been brought forward against it. And in the first place, it is stated that St. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, gives evidence to prove that the covenant of Abraham was repealed by the ushering in of the gospel. Now what does St. Paul say upon the subject? He tells us of a *faulty* covenant; Heb. viii. 7, 8, 9; and of a new covenant being made with the house of Israel, instead of the faulty one. But does he say that this covenant was the covenant which God made with Abraham? Most certainly not; for there is no reference to Abraham's covenant, in the passage. The covenant of Abraham was not *faulty*; for it embraced Christ and the gospel.—Gen. xii. 3. Abraham's covenant was said to be an everlasting one, and, therefore, was not to be repealed.—Gen. xvii. 7. Abraham's covenant, being spoken to a thousand generations, must be considered as of perpetual duration.—1. Chron. xvi. 15, 16. Abraham's covenant, being made four hundred and thirty years before the ceremonial law, according to St. Paul, could not be repealed with that law.—Gal. iii. 17; and hence the irresistible conclusion, that Abraham's covenant is not alluded to, in the passage. What covenant,

then, does the apostle refer to? I answer, the covenant of Horeb, which was made four hundred and thirty years after the covenant of Abraham: and this is positively expressed in St. Paul's quotations from Jeremiah's prophecy—"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." Accordingly, in Deuteronomy, Moses says: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb; the Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day."—Deut. v. 2, 3. The conclusion, therefore is that Abraham's covenant is not repealed.

But again, we are told that Abraham's covenant was a national compact, having respect to the possession of the lands of Canaan, and other temporal blessings; and that circumcision was nothing more than a token or badge of national descent, by which the posterity of Abraham should be kept pure from other nations, until the promised Messiah was born.

To this I reply, that the objection is far worse than absurd: it being in direct opposition to the whole current of the sacred Scripture. What greater blessing can man desire, or can God bestow, than the one embraced in the covenant—"I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:" and in accordance with this, St. Peter says to the inquiring Jews, "the promise is unto you and your children," viz: the promise of the covenant, in which God covenants to be a God to Abraham and his seed: and so, also, St. Paul informs us of Abraham's blessing coming on the Gentiles,

through Jesus Christ; and of all baptized persons being Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. The only part of the objection, therefore, worthy our notice, is, "that circumcision was a mere badge of national descent." This, however, is as directly opposed to Scripture as the other; for Abraham's servants received that seal, as well as his natural seed—Ishmael as well as Isaac—Esau as well as Jacob.—Gen. xvii. 12, 13, Gen. xvii. 2, 3. And the descendants of those men who were excluded from the promise, have retained the same rite even to the present day. Moreover, St. Paul declares, "that they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the children of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: the children of the promise, are counted for the seed."—Rom. ix. 6, 8. Now if the covenant of Abraham were a mere national compact, and had respect solely to temporal blessings, there is not a word of truth in this declaration: for, on that ground, they were all Israel, who were of Israel, and the children of the flesh, whether believers or unbelievers, did inherit the promise. But when St. Paul tells us, that all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are the children of Abraham, he teaches us that Abraham's covenant was something more than a national compact; and that it had respect to something nobler than the lands of Canaan.

But it is said that in the gospels repentance and faith are regarded as prerequisites to baptism. Therefore the argument drawn from our Lord's words—"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." "An infant cannot believe, and therefore it must not be baptized." But this argument proves too much;

for it deprives the infant of *salvation*, as well as of baptism. "He that believeth not shall be damned:" an infant cannot believe, and therefore it must be damned. Now I appeal to your judgment, if the argument for the eternal condemnation of the infant, be not as strong as the one that excludes it from the christian privileges of baptism; and yet very few pretend but that it is possible for an infant to be saved. Indeed, every argument that would exclude the infant from baptism, would also exclude it from heaven; for if it be not the subject of baptism, it is not the subject of grace; and if it is not the subject of grace, it is not fit for the society of angels and saints.

But the passage in question does not say that faith, in the subject, is an essential prerequisite to baptism; but only, that *both* are necessary to everlasting life, therefore instead of the text being understood in any other sense, the inspired writers adduce frequent instances of baptism preceding repentance, faith, and the forgiveness of sins. Thus John's baptism was only unto repentance.—Matt. iii. 11. Peter informed the Jews, that Christian baptism was for the remission of sins, Acts ii. 38; and Simon Magus, after he was baptized, was pronounced by the apostles to be in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.—Acts viii. 13, 23. It is stated, in the same chapter, that "the Holy Ghost was fallen on none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."—Acts viii. 16. It is true, that it is said of Simon, that "he believed also;" but as he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, his faith could not be *justifying* faith. It is said of those that were baptized with him, that they believed Philip, preaching the

things concerning the kingdom of God. And this was the nature of Simon's faith—a simple belief in the gospel similar to the belief of those who inquired of Peter saying—"What shall we do?" when he said to them, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins:" Thus plainly intimating, that they had not yet received the remission of sins; and yet they were the subjects of baptism. From all this it is evident that our Lord did not intend that saving faith should at all times precede this ordinance; and hence little children may be baptized without it.

Again, it is objected against infant baptism, that if it take the place of circumcision, it is not valid unless administered on the eighth day. To this I reply: circumcision was valid, when administered upon any day; and why not baptism?—Ex. iv. 29, Josh. v. 2.

It is further asserted against baptism being in the place of circumcision as the seal of the covenant, that the Holy Spirit is said to be this seal; and hence it is thought that baptism is excluded. And what, I ask, is baptism but an outward expression of the spirit's operation? for this operation of God's spirit upon the heart, is the very thing signified by the sign: hence the meaning of the following passages: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"—"I will pour out my spirit"—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you"—"Then shall he sprinkle many nations"—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." So that if God's spirit be the seal of the covenant, it must be regarded as its invisible part, which all acknowledge to be represented by its outward and visible sign, water. Of this, however, I have already given you sufficient testimony.

But when all other objections fail, it is urged that if

baptism take the place of circumcision, we should not baptize females ; for they were not circumcised. To this I reply : that, although females did not receive a mark of circumcision under the former dispensation, yet they were considered as being circumcised, on the ground of their standing in the male. It is well known that no uncircumcised person was permitted to eat of the passover ; but females partook of it ; and therefore females were regarded as being in a circumcised state. Besides, we have the example of Christ and his apostles, for baptizing females ; and this we regard as sufficient.

Think not, my Brethren, that it is left with you to determine whether or no you shall have your offspring consecrated in holy baptism ; for if God has instituted this sacrament for their benefit, and you be found to reject the ordinance of his appointment, it is fearfully to be expected that he will look upon you as the despisers of his covenant. How many professed Christian parents most shamefully neglect the baptism of their children ? How many seem to look upon the ordinance as if it were entirely useless, or as if it were an unnecessary burden, rather than a christian duty ? How many there are in this age of impiety, who, without any respect for the ordinance of God, just name their children as they do their domestic animals, and thereby place them as strangers to the covenant of promise ?

Unbelievers may often suggest to you what good can a few drops of water do upon the face of the child ; but this is nothing else than to question the propriety of the divine institution. The Israelites might have thus reasoned, when they were commanded

tolook upon the brazen serpent in the wilderness ; and Moses might have questioned the utility of smiting the Red Sea with his rod ; but it was no more their business to question the propriety of obeying these commands of God, than it is ours to question the propriety of baptizing our children. The grand question which must determine our duty, in believing and practising infant baptism, is this :—Do the inspired writers acknowledge it to be a divine institution ? or, is it an ordinance of God's appointment ? Ponder, I beseech you, the evidences I have introduced ; and if, after surveying the whole ground, you still feel doubts concerning the truth of any leading sentiment in favor of the doctrine, propose to yourselves this question, and see that you answer it to your own satisfaction : By what method are the arguments in favor of infant baptism, to be set aside ? or how are they to be explained away, on the supposition that they are really on the side of error ?

But the inquiry—What good can the baptism of little children do ? which is so often sounded in our ears, can, after all, be intelligently answered. By it our children are grafted into the church of God : Rom. vi. 3 : by it they are recognized as the children of God : Gal. iii. 26, 27 : by it they are secured the blessings of the christian covenant : Mark xvi. 16, Titus iii. 5, 6 : by it they receive their name, which continually reminds them of their covenant vows.—Acts xv. 17, 2, Chron. vii. 14, Amos ix. 12, Luke ii. 21. In a word, it secures to them every blessing for time and eternity ; and, therefore, it is of infinite importance, as a means of grace, and an ordinance of God. We need not be informed, that God can bestow blessings without bap-

tism. We have nothing to do with what God *may* do. His spirit is said to accompany the water, and it is, therefore, our duty to prize the ordinance, because it is of his appointment.—John iii. 5, Acts ii. 38-39.

My brethren, let us praise God that he is our God, and the God of our children—that while He graciously accepts us he kindly accepts our children also. May we never be separated from those we love; but finally, as we meet with the approving plaudits, “Well done, good and faithful servant”—as we begin the loud Hallelujahs of triumph in heaven, and know that we are freed from sin, and sorrow, and temptation, may our loud anthems of triumph be heightened by the presence of the children whom God hath given us; and may we there, in ecstasies of rapture, hear them give glory to God, that they had received the seal of that covenant in which they were included. And now to the *God of Abraham*, to our *God*, and the *God of our children*, be ascribed everlasting praises, both now and evermore. **AMEN and AMEN.**